

## *Current Status of Claims*

### *1. (currently amended)*

A device for connecting structural elements, the device consisting of a male component and a female component having at least over a ~~[[part]]~~ **portion** of their length wedge-shaped engaging parts having ~~[an almost dovetail-like,]~~ **a dovetailed** gradually decreasing cross-section, and wherein the male component and the female component are mountable on a face or edge of the structural elements in order, on movement of the structural elements relative to each other, to cause the male and female components to engage wedgingly, characterised ~~[in that the male and female components each have at least one portion designed for]~~ **in at least a first abutment portion is formed on said male component and at least a second abutment portion is formed on said female component for edge-to-edge** abutment against each other ~~[[and arranged]]~~ **when said male component and said female component are engaged a predetermined amount, said edge-to edge abutment being made** to prevent the male component from penetrating wedgingly to the maximum into the female component, thereby avoiding mutual deformation of the male and female components or material strain thereof on penetration. ~~[[Figs. 1-7]]~~

### *2. (currently amended)*

A device as disclosed in claim 1, characterised in that ~~[[the male component]]~~ **said first abutment portion includes** ~~[[is equipped with]]~~ two lugs ~~[[that are]]~~ **and said second abutment portion includes corresponding abutment edge portions, said lugs being** arranged to abut against and be supported by ~~[[respective]]~~ **the corresponding abutment** edge portions on ~~[the wedge-shaped engaging part of the]~~ **said** female component. ~~[[Figs. 2, 3]]~~

### *3. (currently amended)*

A device as disclosed in claim 1, characterised in that ~~[the female component is equipped with]~~ **said first abutment portion has** two lugs that extend out to the side from a portion arranged in continuation of the wedge-shaped engaging part, and that ~~[[the female component]]~~ **said second abutment portion** similarly has ~~[[a portion]]~~ **an abutment surface** arranged in continuation of its wedge-shaped engaging part in order to abut against and support said lugs. ~~[[Fig. 6]]~~

4. (currently amended)

A device as disclosed in claim 1, characterised in that the ~~[[female component]]~~ **second abutment portion** ~~[[is equipped with]]~~ **has** a projecting stop **portion spaced from and aligned with** ~~[that extends out from a portion arranged in continuation of]~~ the wedge-shaped engaging part, ~~[the stop being arranged] to~~ abut against ~~[[and support]]~~ **the first abutment portion** at a narrowest end portion of the wedge-shaped engaging part of the male component **and thereby support the male component.** ~~[[ (Fig. 4) ]]~~

5. (currently amended)

A device as disclosed in claim 1, characterised in that **first abutment portion includes a recess with an abutment edge and** ~~[the female component has projections designed]~~ **second abutment portion includes a projecting stop portion** to engage with ~~[[a corresponding]]~~ **the abutment edge at the** recess in the male component in order, on insertion of the male component into the female component, to limit the insertion ~~[in that a short end of]~~ **when the abutment edge of** the recess ~~[comes to rest against the projection]~~ **abuts the projecting stop portion.** ~~[[ (Fig. 1) ]]~~

6. (currently amended)

A device as disclosed in claim 1, characterised in that ~~[[on]]~~ **the first abutment portion includes a fixed abutment edge surface and the** ~~[female component there is arranged a]~~ **second abutment portion includes a deflectable retaining spring having an abutment edge which constitutes an** inhibiting device **and** which, on ~~[[the]]~~ wedging engagement of the male component with the female component, **the abutment edge of the retaining spring** enters releasable engaging abutment ~~[with an edge portion of the inhibiting device against an edge portion of the wedge-shaped engaging part]~~ **with the fixed abutment edge** of the male component, the inhibiting device thus releasably ~~[[inhibit]]~~ **inhibiting** against axial movement of the male and female components **until the retaining spring is deflected out of engagement with the fixed abutment edge surface of the male component.** ~~[[ (Fig. 5) ]]~~

7. (currently amended)

A device as disclosed in claim 6, characterised in

**a release bar with a release surface , the release surface bar being rotatable on a fixed axis with respect to the female component, such that engagement of the**  
[inhibiting device is a retaining spring whose engagement] **deflectable spring** with the

- 5 **fixed abutment edge of the** male component is releasable by [means of a release bar  
which can be passed into a space defined by the male and female components in order, on  
the] turning of the **release** bar about its [[longitudinal]] **fixed** axis, to [provide by means  
of a pin or eccentric disc affixed to the bar, a bending of] **enable the release surface to**  
**engage and deflect** the **deflectable** spring so as to release the engagement **of the**  
10 **abutment edge of the deflectable spring** with the **fixed abutment edge on the** male  
component. [[(Fig. 5)]]

8. (currently amended)

A device as disclosed in claim 6, characterised in

that the **deflectable** retaining spring is a leaf spring, and that the releasing counterforce of  
the spring is adjustable[[, for example,]] by means of at least one combined adjusting and  
fixing screw. [[(Fig. 5)]]

9. (cancelled)

10. (currently amended)

A device for connecting structural elements, ~~[wherein the device consists of]~~ comprising at least two male components ~~[[and]]~~ which are engageable with at least two corresponding female components ~~[[which are]]~~, the components being mountable on a face or edge of the structural elements in order, on movement of the structural elements relative to each other, to cause the male and female elements to engage, characterised in ~~[that the male component is in the form of an angled hook designed to be passed with wedging action into the female component, and that the device consists of two connectable rails, that each rail has at least one pair of male and female components arranged as an integral unit, wherein a recess that is adjacent to a male component in a rail forms a female component in this rail and is designed for engagement with a male component in the opposing rail, that on mutual engagement between the rails the opposing male components have opposing faces resting against each other, and that the rails are equipped with engaging members for limiting the vertical movement of the rails in relation to each other, and thus the movement of the male and female components in relation to each other and their degree of engagement. (Figs. 8 and 9)]~~

- that the device comprises a first rail and a second rail which are connectable,  
- that a male component on each rail is in the form of a hook integral with the rail, angled away from the longitudinal direction of the rail and bordering a hole in the rail,  
- that a female component on each rail is constituted by said hole in the rail,  
- that the male component of the first rail is engageable with the female component of the second rail, and the male component of the second rail is engageable with the female component of the first rail,  
- that upon wedging engagement between the male and female components, male components of the first and second rail have opposing faces resting against each other, and  
- that each rail has at least one longitudinally extending male engaging member integral with the rail and protruding from a face of the rail, and has at least one female engaging member formed as a longitudinal hole in the rail, wherein male and female engaging members on opposing rails upon engagement with each other are located and configured to limit mutual movement of the rails in longitudinal direction thereof and thereby the degree of mutual engagement of the male and female components.

11. *(currently amended)*

A device as disclosed in claim 10, characterised in that the engaging **male and female** members of the **first and second** rails, **respectively** in addition ~~[[are designed]]~~ **provide** for lateral stabilisation of the rails.

12. *(currently amended)*

- 5 A device as disclosed in claim 1, characterised in that ~~[[the structural elements are formed of a non-compostable material, for example, lightweight concrete, and that a profiled attachment fitting for securing said male parts and female parts is secured to at least one end portion of the]]~~ **said male part and female parts are attached to a respective profiled attachment fitting which is securable to at least one end portion of a respective** structural member.

13. *(currently amended)*

A device as disclosed in claim 12, characterised in that ~~[[sealing strips are disposed between two]]~~ **upon engagement of the male and female components to join** adjacent structural members, **sealing strips close an interspace between the structural members.**

14. *(currently amended)*

- 5 A device as disclosed in ~~[[one or more of]]~~ claim 10, characterised in that ~~[[the structural elements are formed of a non-compostable material, for example, lightweight concrete, and that a profiled attachment fitting for securing]]~~ **said male part[[s]] and female parts [[is secured to at least one end portion of the]] are attached to a respective profiled attachment fitting which is securable to at least one end portion of a respective** structural member.